

UNITED STATES
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 6

FILED

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REGIONAL HEARING CLERK
EPA REGION VI

In the Matter of

Guadalupe County,
a New Mexico municipality,

Respondent

Permit No. NMU001677

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Docket No. CWA-06-2011-1727

CONSENT AGREEMENT AND FINAL ORDER

I. PRELIMINARY STATEMENT

1. This Consent Agreement and Final Order ("CAFO") is issued under the authority vested in the United States Environmental Protection Agency ("EPA") pursuant to Section 309(g) of the Clean Water Act ("Act"), 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g). This CAFO is issued to simultaneously commence and conclude this proceeding to assess a civil penalty in accordance with 40 C.F.R §§ 22.13(b), 22.18(b)(2) and 22.18(b)(3), as described in the "Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties and the Revocation/Termination or Suspension of Permits."

2. The EPA and Guadalupe County ("Respondent")(collectively, "Parties") agree that settlement of the relevant matters without litigation will save time and resources, that it is in the public's interest, and that the entry of this CAFO is the most appropriate means of resolving such matters. Compliance with all the terms and conditions of this CAFO resolves only those violations specified in this CAFO.

3. Respondent admits the jurisdictional allegations herein; however, Respondent neither admits nor denies the specific Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law ("Findings") contained in this CAFO. This CAFO states a claim upon which relief may be granted.

4. Respondent expressly waives any right to contest the factual allegations or conclusions of law contained in this CAFO, and waives its right to appeal the Final Order set forth herein.

5. Before the taking of any testimony, and without adjudication of any issue of law or fact, the parties agree to the terms of this CAFO and to its issuance. Respondent consents to the assessment and payment of a civil penalty in the amount and by the method stated below.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

6. Respondent is a municipality chartered under the laws of the State of New Mexico, and as such, Respondent is a "person" as that term is defined at Section 502(5) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1362(5), and 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

7. At all times relevant to the violations alleged herein ("relevant time period"), Respondent owned or operated the Sangre de Cristo Regional Mutual Domestic Water Consumers and Mutual Sewage Works Association water utility system Phase 3 Project, a seventeen (17) acre construction site, located at NM 386, in Anton Chico, Guadalupe County, New Mexico ("facility"), and was therefore an "owner or operator" within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 122.2.

8. During the relevant time period, the facility discharged pollutant-laden storm water into the receiving waters of Tecolote Creek, thence to the Pecos River, which is considered a "water of the United States" within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 122.2. Therefore, the facility acted as a "point source" of a "discharge" of "pollutants."

9. Under Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311, it is unlawful for any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source to waters of the United States, except with the authorization of, and in compliance with a permit issued under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System ("NPDES") program, pursuant to Section 402 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1342.

10. Because Respondent owned or operated a facility that acted as a point source of discharges of pollutants to waters of the United States, Respondent and the facility are subject to the Act, 33 U.S.C. §§ 1251 through 1387, and the NPDES program.

11. Respondent's construction activities at the facility include (but are not limited to) clearing and grading operations resulting in the disturbance of greater than five (5) acres of land. The land disturbed by Respondent's activities is part of a water utility project and is a component of a common plan that will ultimately disturb greater than five (5) acres of land.

12. Respondent's activities referenced in Paragraph No. 11 are "industrial activity" within the meaning of 40 C.F.R. § 122.26(b)(14)(x). As such, Respondent is required to obtain an NPDES permit for storm water discharges from the facility.

13. Section 402(a) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1342(a), provides that the Administrator of EPA may issue permits under the NPDES program for the discharge of pollutants from point sources to waters of the United States. Any such discharge is subject to the specific terms and conditions prescribed in the applicable permit.

14. Respondent failed to apply for permit coverage for its storm water discharges associated with construction activities at the facility, and the facility was not covered by an NPDES permit during the relevant time period for the storm water discharges.

15. Each day that a storm water discharge occurred at the facility and Respondent operated the facility without NPDES permit coverage is a separate violation of Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311.

16. During the time period of July 10, 2010 through September 7, 2010, there were at least five (5) occasions of one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) inch or greater rainfall events at the facility.

17. Each rainfall event referenced in Paragraph No. 16 resulted or likely resulted in a discharge of pollutants from the facility into waters of the United States; therefore, Respondent violated Section 301 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1311, on multiple occasions.

18. The State of New Mexico is being notified and given an opportunity to consult with EPA regarding the proposed assessment of an administrative penalty against Respondent.

19. EPA is notifying the public of the proposed CAFO and affording the public forty (40) days to comment on the proposed penalty.

III. TERMS OF SETTLEMENT

A. PENALTY PROVISIONS

20. Based on the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, EPA Region 6, considering the relevant criteria pursuant to Section 309(g)(3) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(3), and acting pursuant to the authority of Section 309(g) of the Act, 33 U.S.C.

§ 1319(g), hereby orders that Respondent shall pay to the United States a civil penalty in the amount of four thousand and eighty-four dollars (\$4,084.00) to settle the violations specified in this CAFO.

21. Payment shall be made by one of the following methods within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this CAFO.

- a. By mailing a bank check, cashier's check or certified check, payable to "Treasurer of the United States," to:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Fines and Penalties
Cincinnati Finance Center
P.O. Box 979077
St. Louis, MO 63197-9000

- b. By wire transfer to:

Federal Reserve Bank of New York
ABA: 021030004
Account: 68010727
SWIFT address: FRNYUS33
33 Liberty Street
New York, NY 10045
Field Tag 4200 of the Fedwire message should read:
"D68010727 Environmental Protection Agency"

- c. By overnight mail (Express, FedEx, DHL, etc.) to:

U.S. Bank
1005 Convention Plaza
Mail Station SL-MO-C2GL
St. Louis, MO 63101
Phone: 314-418-4087

- d. By credit card payments to <https://www.pay.gov>

(enter sfo 1.1 in the search field)

"In the Matter of Guadalupe County, Docket No. CWA-06-2011-1727" should be clearly marked on the check or other payment method to ensure credit for payment.

22. Respondent shall send simultaneous notices of payment, including a copy of the check, or other payment method, to each of the following:

- (1) Regional Hearing Clerk (6RC-D)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
- (2) Chief, NPDES Compliance Section (6EN-WC)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733
- (3) Chief, Water Enforcement Legal Branch (6RC-EW)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Respondent's adherence to these procedures will ensure proper credit when payment is received by EPA.

23. Respondent agrees not to claim or attempt to claim a federal income tax deduction or credit covering all or any part of the civil penalty paid to the United States Treasurer.

24. Pursuant to 31 U.S.C. § 3717 and 40 C.F.R. § 13.11, unless otherwise prohibited by law, EPA will assess interest and late payment penalties on outstanding debts owed to the United States and a charge to cover the costs of processing and handling a delinquent claim. Interest on the civil penalty assessed in this CAFO will begin to accrue thirty (30) days after the effective date of the CAFO and will be recovered by EPA on any amount of the civil penalty that

is not paid by the respective due date. Interest will be assessed at the rate of the United States Treasury tax and loan rate in accordance with 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(a). Moreover, the costs of the Agency's administrative handling of overdue debts will be charged and assessed monthly throughout the period the debt is overdue. See 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(b).

25. EPA will also assess a fifteen dollar (\$15.00) administrative handling charge for administrative costs on unpaid penalties for the first thirty (30)-day period after the payment is due and an additional fifteen dollars (\$15.00) for each subsequent thirty (30)-day period that the ~~penalty remains unpaid. In addition, a penalty charge of up to six percent (6%) per year will be~~ assessed monthly on any portion of the debt which remains delinquent more than ninety (90) days. See 40 C.F.R. § 13.11(c). Should a penalty charge on the debt be required, it shall accrue from the first day payment is delinquent. See 31 C.F.R. § 901.9(d). Other penalties for failure to make a payment may also apply.

26. Pursuant to Section 309(g)(9) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(9), any person who fails to pay, on a timely basis, a civil penalty ordered or assessed under this section shall be required to pay, in addition to such penalty and interest, the United States enforcement expenses including, but not limited to, attorneys' fees and costs incurred by the United States for collection proceedings, and a quarterly non-payment penalty for each quarter during which such failure to pay persists. Such non-payment penalty shall be twenty percent (20%) of the aggregate amount of such person's outstanding penalties and non-payment penalties accrued as of the beginning of each quarter. In such a collection action, the validity, amount, and appropriateness of the penalty assessed by this CAFO, and the terms of this CAFO shall not be subject to review.

B. GENERAL PROVISIONS

27. To execute this Agreement, Respondent shall forward this copy of the CAFO, with original signature, to:

Mr. Scott McDonald (6RC-EW)
U.S. EPA, Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

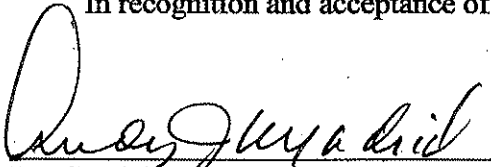
28. Issuance of this CAFO does not relieve Respondent from responsibility to comply with all requirements of the Act and the requirements of any permits issued thereunder, as described in Section 309(g)(7) of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319(g)(7), nor does it constitute a waiver by EPA of its right to enforce compliance with the requirements of Respondent's permits or other requirements of the Act by actions pursuant to Section 309 of the Act, 33 U.S.C. § 1319.

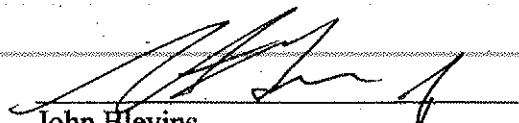
29. In any action to enforce this CAFO, Respondent shall not assert as a defense any act or failure to act by any of its officers, directors, employees, agents, servants, contractors, subcontractors, successors or assigns.

30. Each party agrees to bear its own costs and attorneys' fees in this matter, except to the extent that Respondent may be responsible for reasonable costs and expenses of enforcement and collection proceedings for failure to comply with the terms of this CAFO. Furthermore, Respondent specifically waives its right to seek reimbursement of its costs and attorneys' fees under the Equal Access to Justice Act (5 U.S.C. § 504), as amended by the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act (P.L.104-121), and any regulations promulgated pursuant to those Acts.

31. Each undersigned representative of the parties to this agreement certifies that he or she is fully authorized by the party represented to enter into the terms and conditions of this agreement and to execute and legally bind that party to it.

In recognition and acceptance of the foregoing:


For Guadalupe County 4/21/11
Date



John Blevins 6-10-11
Director Date
Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

FINAL ORDER

Pursuant to the Consolidated Rules of Practice Governing the Administrative Assessment of Civil Penalties, 40 C.F.R. Part 22, the foregoing Consent Agreement is hereby ratified.

This Final Order shall not in any case affect the right of EPA or the United States to pursue appropriate injunctive or other equitable relief or criminal sanctions for any violations of law.

This Final Order shall resolve only those causes of action alleged in the CAFO. Nothing in this Final Order shall be construed to waive, extinguish or otherwise affect Respondent's (or its officers', agents', servants', employees', successors', or assigns') obligation to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, including the regulations that were the subject of this action. The Respondent is ordered to comply with the terms of settlement and the civil penalty payment instructions as set forth in the Consent Agreement. Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 22.31(b), this Final Order shall become effective upon filing with the Regional Hearing Clerk.

Issuance Date: 6-14-11
Regional Judicial Officer
U.S. EPA, Region 6

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on the 21 day of June, 2011, the original of the foregoing Consent Agreement and Final Order was hand delivered to the Regional Hearing Clerk, U.S. EPA, Region 6 (6RC-D), 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733, and that a true and correct copy was placed in the United States mail, by certified mail, return receipt requested, addressed to the following:

Copy by certified mail,
return receipt requested:

Mr. Andy Madrid, County Manager
Guadalupe County Administration/Court House
130 South 4th Street
Santa Rosa, NM 88435

Copy:

Mr. Glenn Saums
Acting Bureau Chief
Surface Water Quality Bureau
New Mexico Environment Department
P.O. Box 5469
Santa Fe, NM 87502-5469

Copy hand-delivered:

Mr. Scott McDonald (6RC-EW)
Chief, Water Enforcement Legal Branch

Date:

June 21, 2011 